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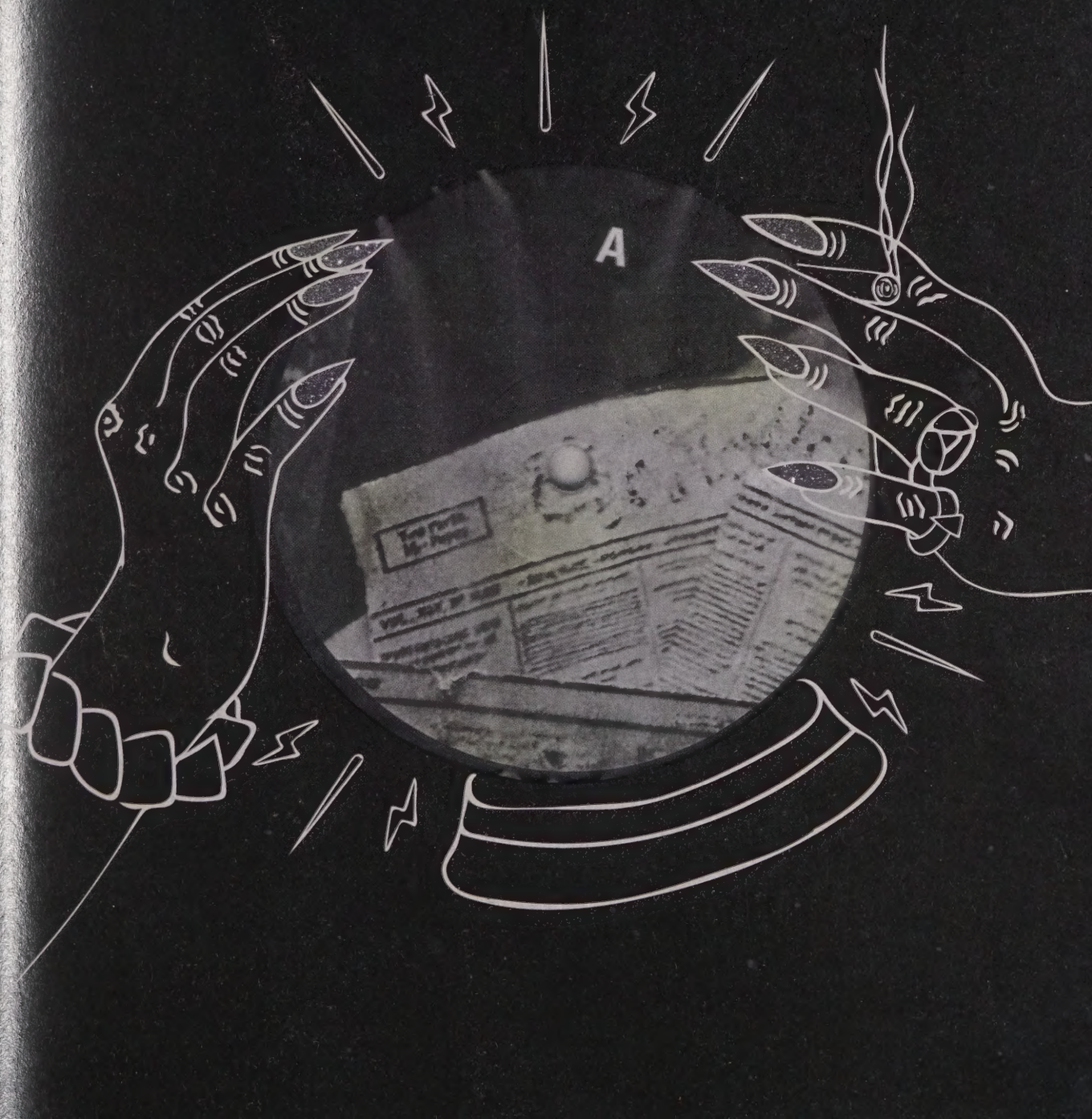
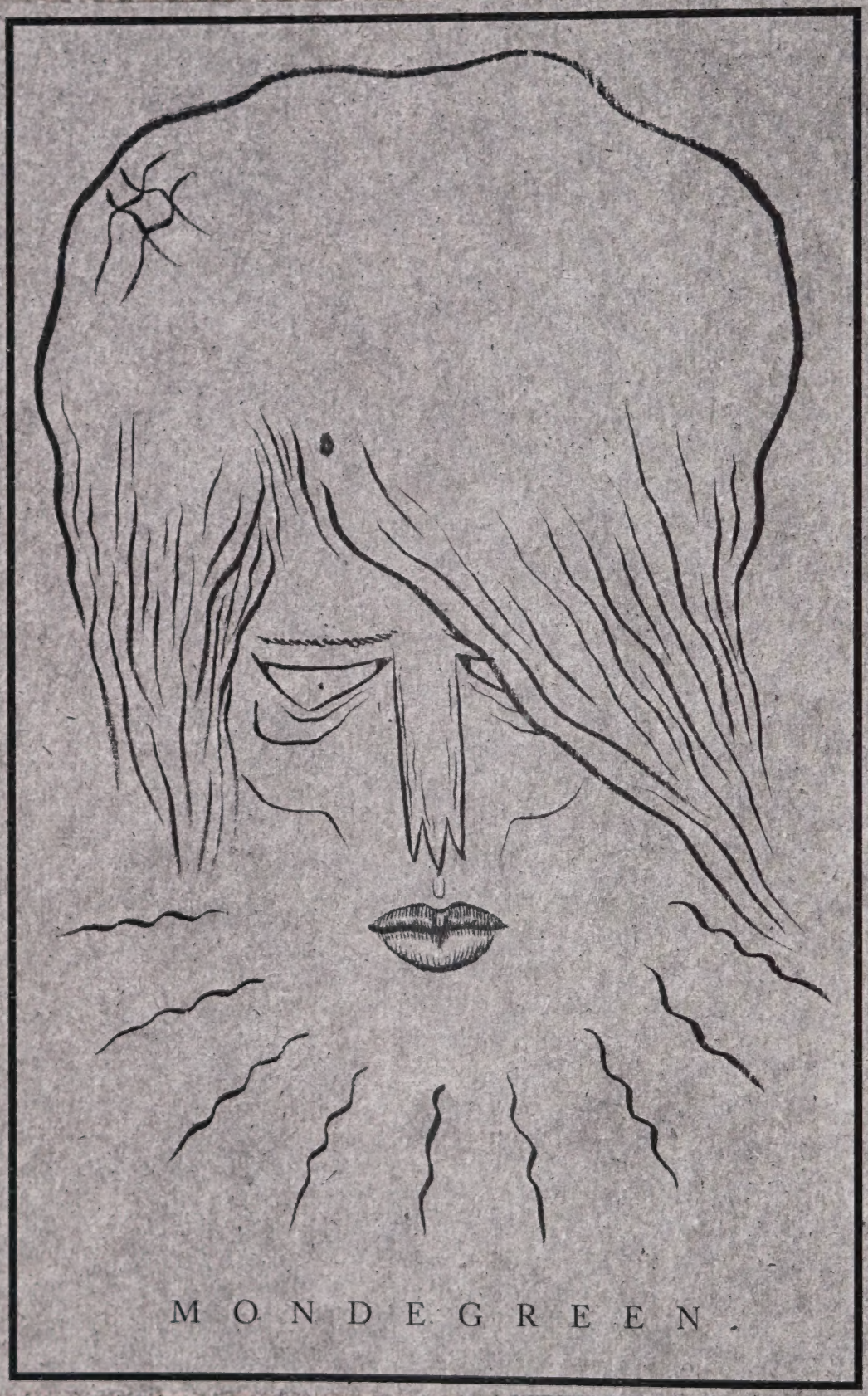
FM PHASIS

RMC 91.1 FM MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE RADIO
SUE 1 // SPRING 2015




MONDEGREEN.

As spring descends upon Middlebury, VT in the year 2015, the smell of wet manure and obsolesence hangs sweetly in the air. What does obsolescence smell like, you say? It's the smell of a WRMC 91.1 FM Middlebury College Radio print publication hot off the press, and no, we're not trying to be ironic. That's right, we've got a real life radio station publication situation on our hands, and it's chock full of content you can't get online at wrmc.middlebury.edu. But before you flip through, take a second, without looking, to guess what time it is. Now look at the clock. What is the actual time? How's your attention span today? When was the last time you listened to the radio? When was the last time you ripped the plastic off a jewel CD case? When was the last time you shouted along to a song in the car by yourself? When was the last time you read about music somewhere other than the fifty tabs open on your computer?

According to various ephemera gathered around the station, tales of old, and the internet, WRMC's original print publication, *FM Phasis,* hasn't been in publication since about 2004, but its history dates back to well before 2000. *FM Phasis*' successor of sorts, *Mondegreen*, (memorialized by Andrew Goulet on the opposite page) is now defunct or has gone deep underground beyond anyone's detection. In reviving a print publication at WRMC, it seemed at once too soon and too late to invoke the late, great *Mondegreen's* moniker. Throughout the writing, design, and layout process, this bound object you now hold in your hands was affectionately referred to as "the zine," and sometimes disparagingly as "the zyne," but you can just call ze *FM Phasis.*

Yes, like the very best bathrooms Middlebury College, this is indeed a gender-neutral zine. That is, we can guarantee that there will be no references to "boy bands" or "girl groups" on the following pages, nor will there be in any future issues, save for articles discussing the topic of said outdated identifiers. Furthermore, like a bathroom, *FM Phasis* can be a place of both public and private catharsis for its contributors and readers alike, whether it's feeling of discovering and cherishing a band, airing worldly grievances, making an emotional connection, or shouting into the abyss. That being said, it is completely acceptable to read *FM Phasis* in a real bathroom, and we might go so far as to recommend it. While we're at it, might we suggest embracing the solitude of the private stalls right outside our very station, as they are rumored to be some of the best on campus. Now that we've run through a brief history of WRMC's past endeavors and repeatedly compared *FM Phasis* to a toilet, it is with great love, care, and a shout of defiance in the face of the SGA that we give you WRMC's first print publication in four years.

-WRMC

TOILET AT GLASSLANDS, 12/30/14

WRMC FM PHASIS

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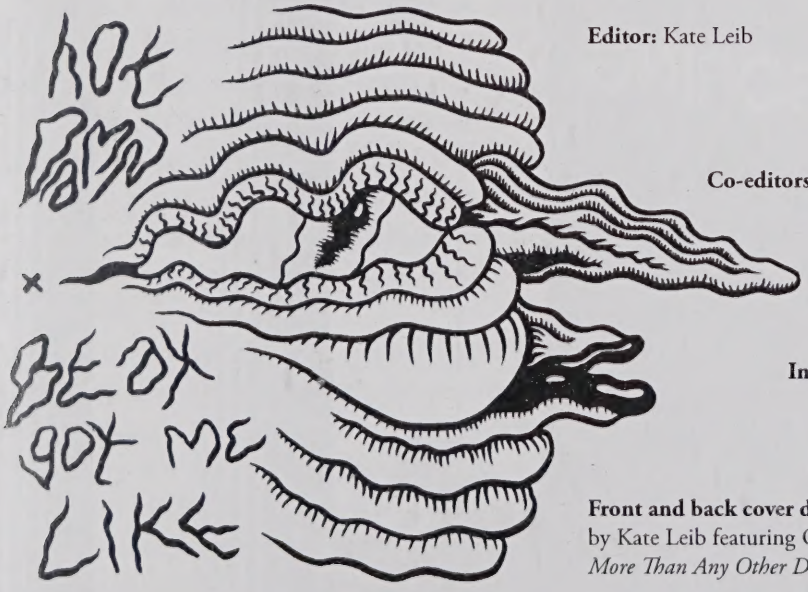

Editor: Kate Leib

Co-editors: Charlie Dulik & Chad Clemens

Inside Cover by Andrew Goulet

Front and back cover design
by Kate Leib featuring Ought's
More Than Any Other Day LP sleeve

by tevan goldberg

I have the distinct pleasure of being WRMC's lone classical music programmer. While I of course relish being the foil to hours of indie rock and late-night underground rap, I became interested in hosting a show for more ideological reasons: the majority of classical radio stations and programs as they exist today suck, and are draining the vitality of the entire genre.

This harsh accusation is not levied without forethought. Classical music is one of the crowning achievements of human civilization, a testament to the power and subtlety of individual expression, and perhaps most shockingly, continues to be written! Try telling that to VPR Classical, King FM in Seattle, or especially those token classical stations on any given satellite radio network, who apparently think that the genre died out when Tchaikovsky did.

"Classical music is treated like a museum piece by the people with the greatest power to change this popular misconception"

I can't tell you how many times I've listened on these stations to the same overture, another overdone Romantic-era symphony, the "Top-40" of classical music if you will. Yes, the music is famous for a reason, but frankly it caters mainly to the stale tastes of old white people that donate to classical radio stations. Living composers are almost never played unless part of a film music program, and most of what they write is schlock.

Classical music is treated like a museum piece by the people with the greatest power to change this popular misconception - it is simply not relevant in popular culture, and barely so in alternative musical/cultural circles. Yet this lack of relevance is not due to the fact that Bach cantatas just don't get your average teenager riled up, it's because there is a massive underrepresentation of contemporary work that is better connected to the modern ear (and not just the ear of classical nerds like myself).

The influential modern Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki has done collaborations with Radiohead, and the Portland Cello Project performs fugues derived from Lil Wayne beats, but I bet you either a) never heard of either or b) didn't hear them on the radio. I believe that truly good classical music is enjoyable to almost anyone as long as the context is correct; these crossover works are excellent ways for people to realize what sets this genre apart and eventually delve deeper into its more cerebral crevasses.

In the 19th century, revolutions were started by the performance of brilliant new works (see Chopin's "Heroic" Polonaise in A flat) and thousands flocked to the funerals of composers. Now, even the most famous and well-respected concert composers are barely known outside the musical community; when I remarked to a friend that Elliot Carter had died last year at age 104, his response was simply "who?" There really is nothing like classical music, because it is *not* just music; it is high art in an all-encompassing form that can change the listener forever. The fact that it has been voluntary relegated to the margins of our culture makes all of us less complete, and it doesn't have to be like that. As long as the perception of classical music remains associated with walkers and hearing aids, there won't be the proper momentum among non-musicians to focus upon the living, breathing elements of the genre that can and should stand along-

here
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classical
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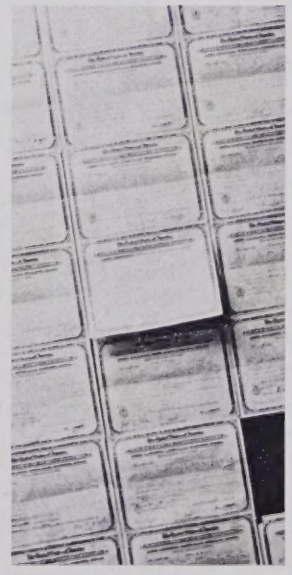
side what is considered "new" music. If it was written in 2014, it's new, even if the tradition behind it spans back centuries.

If you're skeptical that modern classical will either sound like a Beethoven copy or so painfully avant-garde and dissonant as to be unlistenable, here's a few albums to make you reconsider: Mason Bates' "Digital Loom," Yo-Yo Ma's "Goat Rodeo Sessions" (technically bluegrass-classical crossover, but still hip), Nico Muhly's "Drones," and the Kronos Quartet's album "A Thousand Thoughts" (hell, anything by the Kronos Quartet). Most of these have fantastic infusions of modern sounds, electronic music, world music, and require little classical background to enjoy.

So go out, listen, and maybe even find something new to program; modern classical music won't get any help from the current distribution system, and shouldn't be lumped into that unwieldy and misleading category of "Classical" any longer. It deserves relevance, but will only achieve that when you see it on the same playlist as Kanye and Vampire Weekend.

From the WRMC-FM archives...



While Bob Polifka '75 selects discs for his classical music programs from WRMC's library, program director Jeff Freundlich '75 produces his mid-morning show, beamed across Vermont hills by the transmitting antenna in Gifford cupola.

FUCK YOU, THE WAY THE WORLD IS: AN INTERVIEW WITH SHINOBU'S MIKE HUGUENOR

Shinobu is one of those bands you discover that instantly becomes more than just another music project. Or at least that's what happened when I heard the first riffs of "T-t-t-trepaning," the opener to 2006's *Worstward, Ho!* and probably one of the most cathartic songs I've ever heard. It's possible that the personal connection I felt I forged to the band was due to a bunch of factors in my own life, mostly related to being an angsty high-school student in the Bay Area (they're from San Jose) who liked rock music and fronted as way more intellectual than I actually was. But as I met more Shinobu fans who felt the same way, I realized that there really could be something intrinsically powerful about them. A wholly unique combination of not uncommon elements like frenetic dance rock and existential lyrics, Shinobu always seemed to transcend the sum of its parts, channeling true personal expression as opposed to some formula for success. And so the question always arose: "How is this band not way bigger?"

I've theorized it's because of their rejection of easy categorization—too intellectual for most mid-2000s pop-punk, too consistent to change up when trends changed, too focused on philosophical inquiry and not #highschoolproblems for much of the current emo revival, all while holding elements in common with all of these styles. On the band's newest record, *10 Thermidor*, angst is present, but the goal of songs lies beyond reveling in it. The real focus is on parsing difficult elements of modern culture like consumerism, technological disconnect from reality and the necessity of maintaining a revolutionary mindset. Catchy, poetic and kick-ass as always, *10 Thermidor* has received by far the most attention (and praise) of any Shinobu projects. I talked to frontman Mike Huegenor about all of this, and more.

CHARLIE DULIK: The members of Shinobu are all over the place now — what was the process of getting everyone together to create this record like?

MIKE HUGUENOR: Most of the band is back in San Jose now, with Matt being the one remaining rogue element. Bob and Jon were both teaching English in Japan for a while but have since moved back. When we were getting ready to record this album Matt was living in Australia but had plans to be back in San Jose for about a month around Christmas 2013. During that month we recorded all of the basic tracks and all of Matt's vocals and overdubs, then over the next few months we just had to work around everyone's job schedules and come in whenever we could to get the remaining stuff: my vocals, a few guitar overdubs, sequencing, mixing, art, etc.

CD: So many of your songs are personal, but "Violence House" sounded personal in a much more specific way than I've heard before. Can you talk about what that song is about?

MH: Violence House is a song that isn't about my own personal experience, but one which very much resonates with some experiences I've had. It's a story about an abuse survivor, and the sort of never-ending reverberations that survivors feel. The human body can withstand an incredible amount, but trauma is almost like a curse: it invokes itself, continues to harm years later, and past events can be felt very acutely during the present. More specifically, Violence House (like a lot of this record) is about the violence that exists on the margins of modern life. We think about violence as something anomalous and only occurring in isolated incidents, but I very much disagree with that view. Violence happens all the time—it has just been exported, relegated to the margins of modernity, or hidden under the surface. All the shit that we want to be able to buy as cheaply as possible doesn't just come from thin air: it is made in other countries where people are paid shit wages so that we can buy their work for pennies. Then, when they attempt to make it to the other side, stop working themselves to death and come to America, you have people in power like Jan Brewer who breed a culture of rejection and hatred that makes immigrants need to go to "illegal" means of immigration. Then you get coyotes sneaking people across the border. And from there it's a small step until you have coyotes who are also starving, also victims of violence, perpetrating more violence to try and make money and get out from under. Certain human traffickers in the American Southwest will own houses specifically for the use of kidnapping, torturing, and ransoming people who have attempted to cross the border illegally. The house used for this purpose is literally called a "violence house," and people held inside are forced to call everyone they know until a ransom of however many thousands of dollars can be given to the captors. It's a disgusting means of preying on the weakest people of all, but that's also what makes it so effective. These are the people that America doesn't want to help, people who barely even exist on paper. These are the people who know that violence doesn't just go away: it is simply hidden, kept in violence houses, and often used to scapegoat those who already don't have anything. In a sense, the violence house is the house that America has built: where it puts all the violence that it doesn't want to look at.

死のう部

CD: Another song that breaks the mold of a classic Shinobu song is "Jokes" with Jeff Rosenstock. How did that song come to be?

MH: This album went through a few conceptual changes along the way. It ended up being an album about echoes from the past, violence, and anti-capitalism, but it started out as an album about San Jose and Shinobu's attempt to be ourselves. For a long time people thought Shinobu was just kind of a joke band because we were playful live, somewhat destructive, and didn't really give a shit about sounding the way we were supposed to. But the mark of the "joke band" is a damning one, especially when people are increasingly self-serious (as they were in music around the era of Arcade Fire, Interpol, and whatever shit like The Bravery is). "Jokes" is a song about finding yourself on the margin, seeing in to how others see you: a joke, a bunch of kids fucking around. I asked Jeff to sing some of the lyrics because he's much better at screaming than I am, and because I thought having two vocalists would make it more of a nod to blistering hardcore punk, which is what it sorta is, albeit in a Shinobu way.

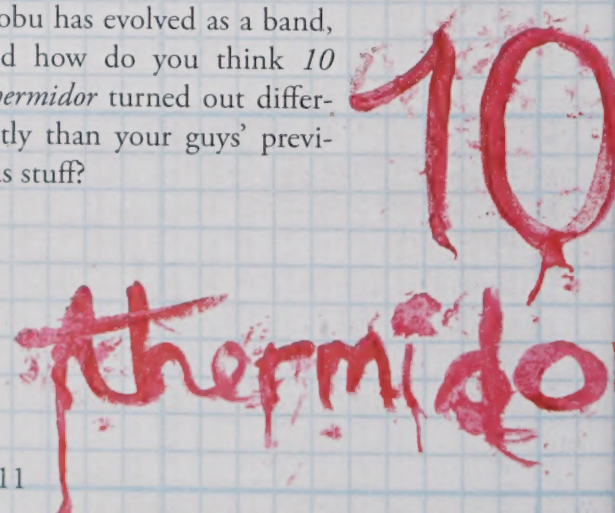
CD: What's the band's relationship like with Jeff? (This question is almost entirely for fanboy reasons but so be it.)

MH: Jeff is one of my best friends. At this point, I see him either to work with him on an album or tour, or just to hang out, seemingly every few weeks. Our relationship is kind of like this: one of us says, "Hey man, I want to do this" and the other goes, "cool, let's do it!"

CD: This record had a whole lot more guests on it than previous Shinobu records, what's the story behind that?

MH: Shinobu would have been long dead by now if it weren't for the support of the friends we have. We would have given up years ago without them. In this sense, I really wanted to involve more people and voices, especially ones that have been meaningful to us either musically or as friends. Rosalie, who sings on "Culture, Inc.," has been a friend for years and she has a beautiful voice. It just sounds incredibly intimate and personal all the time, and I love her performance on that song. My girlfriend Angelina, who has been very willing to put up with my unsuccessful music career for many many years, sings on "9 Thermidor" and she nailed the part. The gang vocals at the end of "Untitled Michael Haneke Project," as well as the "hey hey hey"s at the end of "The Void" are basically all of our close friends who play music in San Jose, as well as other musical friends like The Wild and French Exit. This album is very personal, but it's also the most concerned with modernity as a whole, and I thought bringing in other people would help give it a collective voice. It's one big collective "fuck you" to the way the world is, a big "fuck you" to institutional selfishness, systemic violence, global capitalism—everything that values money over life.

CD: How do you think Shinobu has evolved as a band, and how do you think *10 Thermidor* turned out differently than your guys' previous stuff?



MH: I think every one of our releases has been better than the last. To me, if you're going to make music or art or whatever, you have be learning and adapting all the time. Shinobu has been becoming Shinobu more and more with every album. Almost all of our previous records were really conceptually inspired by two main influences: Sebadoh's *Harmacy*, and *Reveille* through *Milkman*-era Deerhoof. These albums all seemed to me to be about denying the traditional view of the album—about creating a collection of fragments more than one authoritative voice. Those albums to me always seemed dangerous in a way that I think music has to be. Fragments and collections of pieces deny singular narratives and instead create new possible configurations, new meanings. That's what I wanted specifically on *Worstward, Ho!* and *Strange Spring Air*: to be a collection of pieces more than an "album." That's why you have things like unaccompanied guitar tracks, lone trombone pieces, 1 minute songs, "Montel" and "Colonial Kissing Booth," etc. This album was the first time when I really felt it necessary to bring together a unified statement. It came from a place of deep anxiety over almost everything, as well as a kind of disgust with complacency and acceptance of how the system works. It was meant to be in the spirit of revolution, reigniting a revolutionary spirit by describing a world in which revolution has not happened, or has failed. I feel like our modern world is nothing more than June of '68, or 11 Thermidor: we've gotten complacent and accepted failure. Shinobu has never been very thrilled with complacency.

CD: To simplify greatly, the album seems to focus a lot on the things separating people from living a better life like consumerism and literal/metaphorical screens. (Maybe my interpretation is off here. Also I'm a big fan of the reference to the short story.) It's a really interesting evolution from songs like "Not Gonna Happen" off *Worstward Ho!* where I feel the same emotion about being a better person but less direction on how to be better. Does this increased understanding of how to get to where you want to be come from any evolution in your personal lives?

MH: I think my view of the world has changed quite a bit since I was 19, which is when the band started. When I was younger I was much more influenced by people like Sartre and Nietzsche, and in particular Nietzsche's idea of the eternal recurrence. I thought a lot about changing and affirming yourself internally, and I think those albums were much more internal. *10 Thermidor* is more of a statement on external forces: imposed structures that make internal change incredibly difficult or, for many, simply impossible. It's easy to say when you're 19, "quit worrying about things so much, quit being affected by the world so much and just be yourself." When you're 30 you've seen a lot more of the way the world penetrates you, forces your hand, and this album is about pinpointing those things and thumbing your nose at them. It's inspired by things like Zola's "J'accuse" and Pasolini's "I Know."

CD: The energy around Shinobu in the Bay Area now feels different than it has in the past. What it was like during the band's early years and why do you think things have started to change?

MH: The early years were bad for many reasons. We didn't quite have a grip on ourselves musically as well as we do now, and the scene around the Bay Area was just frankly pitiful. I think now there is a combination of forces making our music a lot more of a viable option. People seem curious about different sounds in a way that they weren't really in the aughts. At that time you had to be really clearly defined for people to care. You had to either be dancey and that was your thing, or you were tough and that was your thing, or you were twee and that was your thing. Shinobu has always been a mix, we were too quiet and contemplative for punk, but too noisey and fucked up for indie rock at the time. I think people are finally acknowledging that reality is more subtle than a series of hard oppositions, and in a real way you can see that in the growing acceptance and discussion of trans- identities in public discourse and major media. I don't think it's hard to draw a correlation between the dissolution of hard genres and the acceptance of more fluid gender identities in public consciousness. Both of them are good things.

CD: You guys definitely make a point to rep San Jose and not anywhere else in the Bay Area; can you talk about why that's been so important to you?

MH: San Jose is where we're from, and for a long time it's been very marginalized. It's marginalized in identity by being right in between San Francisco and Santa Cruz—two cities with very clear identities—and marginalized monetarily by the various tech booms that have taken place here: if you're not in tech you're watching rent increase exponentially while opportunities for advancement or even just treading water start

to disappear. We rep San Jose because someone has to, someone has to go to bat for this city and try and make it different. Things don't just get better because you want them to, you have to choose to stay in a place that makes it hard for you to stay so that you can try and nudge it in the right direction.

CD: In a similar vein as the last question, can you talk some about the philosophy behind Asian Man Records?

MH: Asian Man is our spiritual home. Mike Park is very concerned with community, and he approaches the label that way. Everything is done on a handshake, and the values that the label stands for are egalitarian in nature: peace, equality, community, anti-racism, anti-corporatism. It's a great and very positive influence in the area, even if well over half the population of the South Bay has no idea it exists at all. Sometimes you have to stay small to stay true. There's a Badiou quote that I think articulates what I'm trying to say better than I can: "It is entirely legitimate to stipulate axiomatically that, beyond a certain sum, when one starts calculating in tens of millions, all capitalist money is bound to be dirty. If it were possible to handle such quantities of the general equivalent ingenuously, we would know it by now." Asian Man is about staying small, staying positive, and therefore staying true. Because everyone thinks that if they suddenly had immense money and power they would do it differently, that they'd stay true to themselves, but no one does. If it were possible to do that, we would know it by now. It's the Scarface effect. Once you do things just for money, money becomes all that matters and eventually you die in a metaphorical hail of bullets with your face smeared with figurative coke. Asian Man is the anti-Scarface.

"IT'S THE SCARFACE EFFECT. ONCE YOU DO THINGS JUST FOR MONEY, MONEY BECOMES ALL THAT MATTERS AND EVENTUALLY YOU DIE IN A METAPHORICAL HAIL OF BULLETS WITH YOUR FACE SMEARED WITH FIGURATIVE COKE." — MIKE HUGUENOR

CD: Any final comments on the future of Shinobu?

MH: The future of Shinobu is very open right now. We likely won't be able to do too much touring just because of the forces in everyone else's lives right now, but I do think we'll continue to make music in one way or another. My goal for Shinobu now is to retain a revolutionary spirit, and to find new sonic ways of being Shinobu. If we put out more albums they will be more experimental, and more Shinobu.

Jackson Scott - *Sunshine Redux*

RIYL: Ty Segall, Mac DeMarco, Foxygen, Syd Barrett, Elephant 6

Jackson Scott's *Sunshine Redux* channels both new and old vibes, bringing to mind the artists mentioned above. His sound however, is totally new. Scott uses sonic experimentation liberally blends many styles creatively. His vocals are incredibly unique: pitch shifted and feminine, mellow, and slightly nasally. From creepily haunting to energetic rock and roll, the album is widely diverse throughout.

On starting *Sunshine Redux*, Scott wrote on tumblr:

"*never is the future. going to make another record now. will be influenced by nas's illmatic. will be influenced by kubrick. will be influenced by nihilism and a whole mess of other things. will attempt not to give fucks about the outcome, we'll see how that goes. what i do know is there is lots of optimism/hope/love in store so try not to get cynical on me. think i will start a band too.*"

Sunshine Redux is Scott's second album. Now 22, he released his first LP, *Melbourne,* two years ago. "Dissonance" is my favorite track from the new album. It starts with a droning guitar riff and spaced out heavily reverbed vocals, the kind of reverb that just melts you away. Then a dizzying chaos of chattering and laughter takes over and escalates; only the question, "How does that make you feel?," stands out. Next decrescendo, minimalism, and dissonant guitar notes bridge the gap as the song returns to its original melody. I can't recommend *Sunshine Redux* enough; if you like catchy pop melodies coupled with cosmic effects you'll love it. — A-

– Maggie Danna

Genre: Indie Rock
Label: Bloodmoss
Best Tracks: "Broken Record Repeat" "Dissonance" "Ripe For Love"

RIYL: MF DOOM, MellowHype, Vince Staples

After listening to any portion of *I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside*, it should come as no surprise that Earl refers to the album as the most transparent he's ever been about himself. Bristling with self-criticism and conflicted braggadocio, the album marks a significant point in his artistic evolution. His vivid, excessively violent lyrics back in the Odd Future days could have only come from a troubled mind, one more openly and directly addressed on *Doris*. But only on this album does Earl devote his full attention and lyrical arsenal to what's going on in his head, whether it be depression, fury or anything in-between. The result is a muted, down-tempo album which makes every possible effort to eschew popular rap styles in favor of intense, harsh reflection. Earl's self-focus is further cemented by his control over all of the project's production, save for one track. Like his rapping, the beats are uniquely Earl—cloudy, heavy, heady, ploddingly deliberate. Clocking in at just under 30 minutes, the album is as free of fat as it is of any final vestiges of Odd Future influence. *IDLS,IDGO*'s shortcomings arise when Earl gets too far into his own head, with lyrics too vague and beats too stripped back. But its greatest strength, the incredible transparency which Earl uses to convey his own psyche, is inextricably linked. Earl has been called many "nexts," the next Eminem, the next MF DOOM, the next great American poet, but one fact is abundantly clear—for better or for worse, Earl is only going to be Earl. — B+

– Charlie Dulik

Genre: Hip-Hop
Label: Columbia / Tan Cressida
Best Tracks: "Huey" "Mantra"

Sufjan Stevens - *Carrie & Lowell*

RIYL: Nick Drake, Perfume Genius, moms, lemon yogurt

Sufjan Stevens' latest bestowal from the heavens, *Carrie & Lowell*, gently touches your heart with the sharpest of tacks. Unassuming harps, spare synthesizers, and mellow guitars seep together into luscious melodies graced by Stevens' soft mournings, memories, and myths of his recently deceased schizophrenic and bipolar mother, Carrie, who was absent both physically and emotionally for the majority of Stevens' life. Beautiful and bare, this album is simultaneously Stevens' most accessible and his best among a prolific, eclectic, and accomplished career. While *Carrie & Lowell*'s soft tunes are easy on your ears, this album is rough on your heart, tearing at its strings with songs of self-loathing, longing, youth, faith, futility, emptiness, and death. Lots of death. But if anyone is going to remind me of my own mortality, I want it to be Sufjan. "Fuck me I'm falling apart," this album is incredible. — A

– Kate Leib

Genre: Indie Folk
Label: Asthmatic Kitty
Best Tracks: "Should have known better" "Fourth of July" "The Only Thing" "John My Beloved" Blue Bucket of Gold" "Drawn to the blood" "No Shade in the Shadow of the Cross"

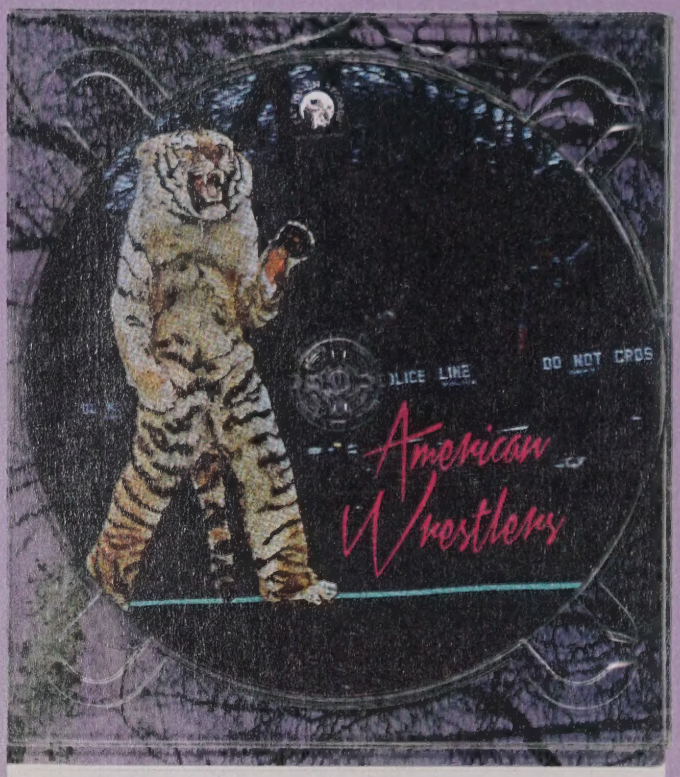
American Wrestlers - *American Wrestlers*

RIYL: Alex G, Sparklehorse, Pure X, early Grandaddy

It's hard to tell just where this relatively private Scottish songwriter fits in the crisis-ridden landscape of contemporary indie rock, especially when his musical ambitions – harkening back to a long-past era of access over aesthetic – are squarely at odds with the technological capabilities of today. Underneath all the jitters, static and the dangerously close waterfall through which McClure sings are some serious pop chops and stadium-ready chord progressions, so much so that one can't help but think this is one of those instances where shitty analog equipment really is holding him back. He particularly shines on upbeat punchy sing-along cuts like singles "I Can Do No Wrong" and "Kelly," but his production inexperience somewhat cheapens the more inventive moments of this debut record. The first peak of slow-burner "Cheapshot," for instance, sports a steadily climbing riff that wouldn't sound out of place on a Pearl Jam record, but which then free-falls with the lushness of a Cocteau Twins melody. Unfortunately the seams of the juncture seem a bit too roughly sewn considering McClure's talents and intents. Nevertheless, whether he's infusing the Gerbils with the new wave rhythms on "Holy" or crooning an introspective ballad that both Pure X and Christopher Owens would envy, Gary McClure has – accidentally or not – put together a continually rewarding collection of lo-fi stunners in American Wrestlers, tailor-made to soundtrack your spring and beyond. — B

– Chad Clemens

Genre: Lo-fi Rock
Label: Fat Possum
Best Tracks: "Kelly" "I Can Do No Wrong" "There's No Crying Over Me Either"



Everything written, played and recorded to cassette by Gary McClure in the city of Saint Louis, MO – 2014.
Dedicated with love to Bridgette Imperial, Burri Sanchez, Bruno Brenaire, Thom Gray & my nuclear brothers forever, amen.

LET'S STAY TIGHT
by margot babington

"The build up is slow, and the drums come in, and then there's this scream," Jordan tells me, hands wrapped around a coffee cup, his voice hoarse. "In the car, right before the scream, I put my face close to steering wheel." He puts down his coffee to show me just how close, with his palm almost touching his nose. "And then I scream, as loud as I can. It's very cathartic," he says. "I'm trying to spread the good word of 'Heavy Pop'."

In the semester I've spent at Middlebury, I haven't screamed, haven't sung along to Jawbreaker in the car like I used to do in Chicago, haven't danced at a show in time to some of my favorite songs. The cinder block walls in my dorm amplify sound, and the people in my hall wouldn't appreciate my rendition of Fugazi's "The Argument." I have turned to other ways to cope.

When I brought my bike to school, it had been a while since I rode downhill—Chicago is devoid of hills—and the acceleration made me nervous. I didn't trust the brakes initially, and my heart raced as I dodged people, clutching the brakes.

Riding downhill for the first time, it became clear that the back tire on my bike is untrue. It ticks as I go from class to class, giving a beat to my daily commute. Biking to geology, the ticking becomes a loud throbbing, faster and faster until I brake.

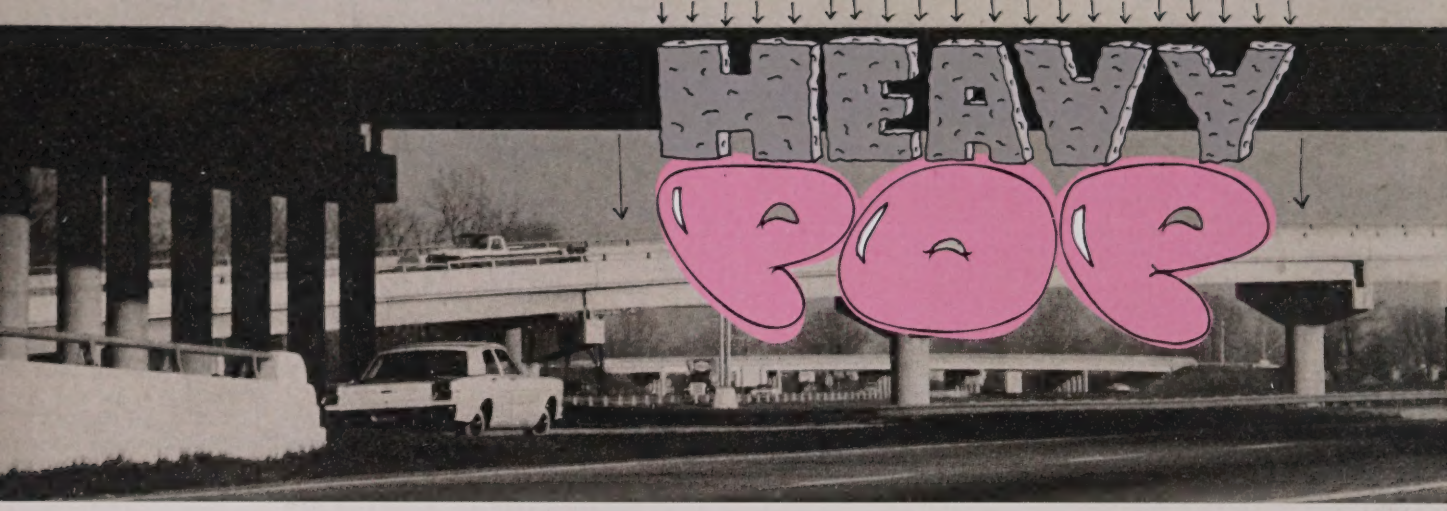
The untrue wheel pulsing loudly behind me makes me reckless—it's ticking a countdown to a messy crash. Most mornings I don't want to brake, I'd rather let acceleration become deceleration and come to a stop naturally. Some mornings I think it would be cathartic to crash, leaving my bike tire bent and slowly clicking, with me lying next to it, cushioned by grass. Crashing isn't about pain, but the violent ticking and wobbling of the wheel naturally building to the cathartic release.

Jordan and I talked about things we think are cathartic over eggs before New Years. He came straight from Michigan and mentions a song, "Heavy Pop," by WU LYF, which he listened to a few times in a row while driving.

B. Fullwood

Two days later, Jordan and I drove to the airport to pick up our friend Hannah. We talked about our siblings, and to lighten the mood I ask him to play "Heavy Pop" for me. With the volume turned all the way up, the song began, and I looked to Jordan to gauge the right time to scream.

The road, the sky, and the surrounding suburb were all grey. The urban sprawl all a blur going eighty down the Kennedy. If it weren't January, I would have rolled down the windows. Two minutes and twenty-nine seconds



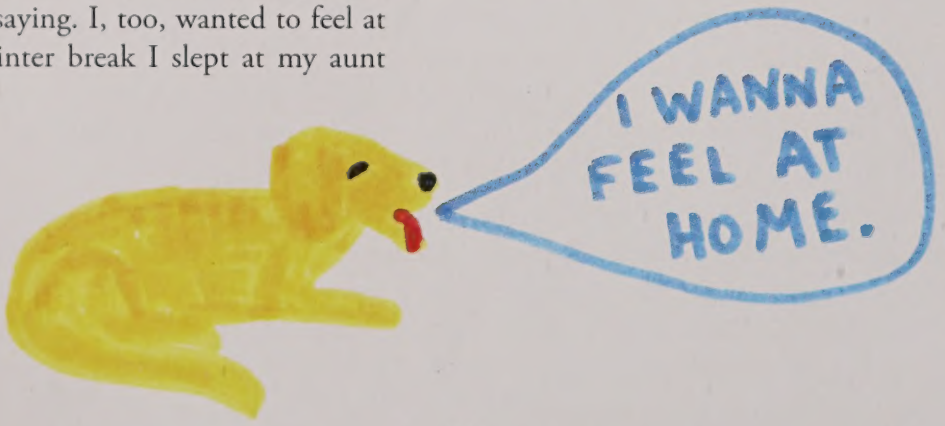
in, we unleashed our scream. Eyes closed and throat burning, I couldn't hear the music anymore and almost couldn't tell when Jordan stopped.

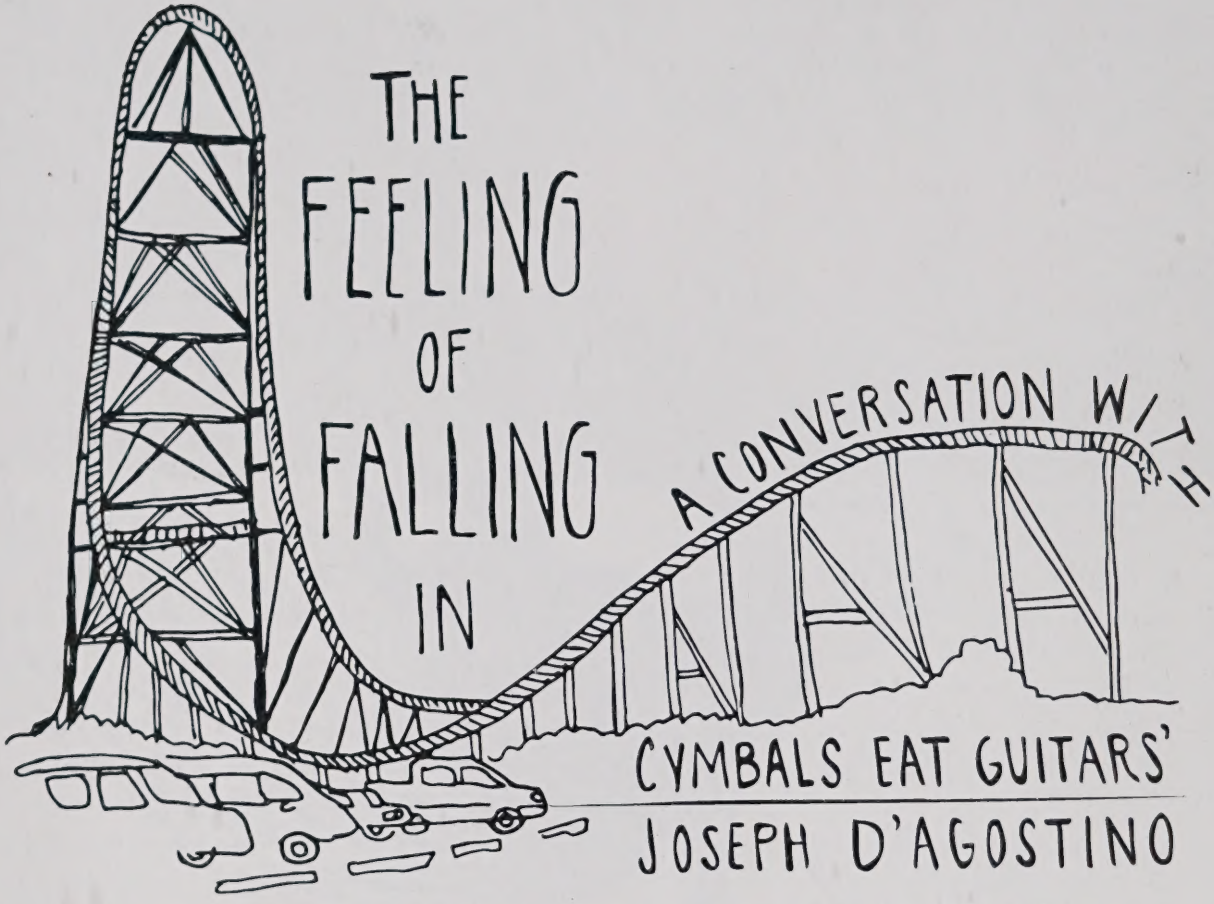
It felt like a turning point in a movie. Jordan's brother would recover, and I would accept all the things I didn't have time to tell Jeff. My sister and I would get along, and I wouldn't impulsively get another tattoo. Or not. I could go back to school and not be able to get out of bed, slowly alienate myself, drink and smoke too much.

The lyrics in "Heavy Pop," are sung in a slurred yell, so I couldn't participate in singing along to the rest of the song. I smiled at Jordan and nodded to the music. "I wanna feel at home" is the one lyric that is clearly English.

It wasn't until I listened to the song later that night in bed that I realized exactly what the singer was saying. I, too, wanted to feel at home. Over winter break I slept at my aunt and uncle's house, dog sitting, and only spent one night in our new house in the suburbs. I refuse to call the suburbs home after living in cities all my life. School began to feel like more like home, but I wasn't thrilled to go back in a couple of days. An unconventional lullaby, I fell asleep with headphones in, "Heavy Pop," on repeat.

When my dad drove me home that night after I hung out with Jordan and Hannah in the city, I played "Heavy Pop," multiple times, still feeling the impending change in the pit of my stomach. I stayed silent, trying to honor the moment in the car with Jordan. The third time the song played, my dad turned to me and asked, "What the hell is this guy trying to say? I want to feel that foam?"





Upon arriving in Williamsburg this past December to interview Joseph D'Agostino, the frontman of Staten Island by way of New Jersey band Cymbals Eat Guitars, I encountered a giant Imagine Dragons advertisement on the side of a building on South Kent Street. I stopped at the three story tall ad to take it all in, and I pondered who exactly this ad was targeting and how much it was costing someone to keep it up there. The familiar chords of CEG's "Jackson" wafted down the street from the soon to be defunct DIY-venue Glasslands, where the band was soundchecking before their show that night. After the soundcheck I walked to get dinner with D'Agostino and on the way we passed a boarded up burger joint formerly known as Williasmburger. "What?! Gone? Where's the New York Times retrospective?" D'Agostino joked of journalists' oft-romanticized lamentation of Brooklyn's golden years of cheaper rent and starving artists in residence. But it's not just the restaurant owners who are shutting their doors due to continuous rent hikes. During the latter half of 2014, three landmark Williamsburg DIY venues—285 Kent, Death By Audio, and Glasslands—all on South Kent Street, bit the dust. Some may call it a tragedy of the metropolis, and some may say it's just the product of the inherent impermanance of DIY spaces, but the domino-like demise of independent businesses on the Williamsburg waterfront is an undeniable consequence of Brooklyn's second wave gentrification in an already upscale, overpriced and overhyped neighborhood. It's rumored that VICE Media is responsible for the Kent Avenue buyout, which if true, is almost as ironic as your average mustachioed yuppie's distressed Ché Geuvara tee.

Before Cymbals Eat Guitars' show on Glasslands' penultimate night of operation, I talked with D'Agostino about growing up, developing a sound, letting loose, and saying to hell with the hype.

KATE LEIB: I'm a big fan of musicians who hail from New Jersey. How'd you like growing up there?

JOSEPH D'AGOSTINO: It made me spend a lot of time in my room reading, and I enjoyed growing up in the Pine Barrens and near the beach and everything, so those are two landscapes that are very close to my heart. I didn't have many friends in high school so I would just absorb a lot of stuff—music, books, everything. It was a good upbringing—things might have been different if grew up in Staten Island if you know what I mean. I tried to do stuff that others kids did like BMX biking, but my parents would never let me have anything with a motor, so I could never do ATVs or dirt bikes, but that's really what everybody did—building sets of jumps in the woods and fucking taking your dirt bike over them at high speeds. But I did the biking for a little bit and I almost punctured myself with my handlebar so I was like okay, that's enough.

KL: Was that with the "2 Hip Soul" bike you reference on *LOSE*?

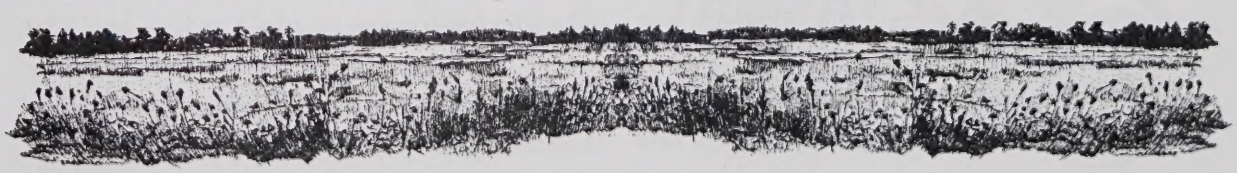
JD: Yeah! You got it right here. Exclusive.

KL: There's a line that I like on the song "Warning" [from *LOSE*] where you say "friendship's the biggest myth," could you elaborate on that a little bit?

JD: A lot of that song is talking about the end of bits and pieces of a relationship I had a few years ago with a girl and her wanting to be friends with me after we broke up and just friendship between men and women when there's sexual attraction being an impossibility was what I was sort of referring to with that. But the verses of that song in particular are pretty oblique, you wouldn't really know what I'm talking about. That song is just kind of about me being a nightmare to be in a relationship with. I don't know if I necessarily believe that, but I wrote it anyway. Your opinions and things change throughout.

KL: There's another line on "2 Hip Soul" when you say "I learned to scream to Bone Machine," and I found it pretty relatable because that's all I did while driving in high school…Was there a moment when you were younger when you realized that screaming and singing could be the same thing and that you had potential to become a vocalist?

JD: It was a weird thing, the vocal style that I started to develop on *Why There Are Mountains*

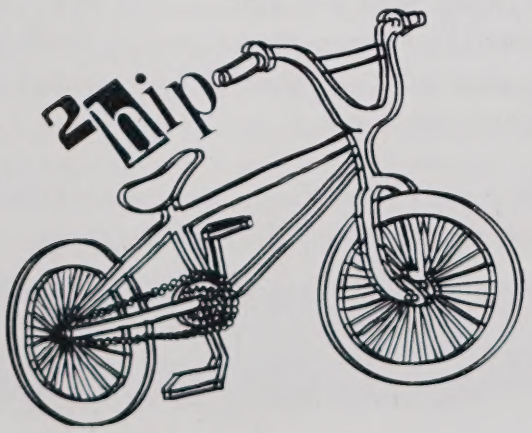


[2009] only came about literally when I was in the booth and all the music was done and I had to lay the vocals on top of it. I was like okay, I'm not a great singer—at the time I wasn't—I have to rise to the occasion and do something that's pretty high stakes. And at the time I was listening to *Black Sheep Boy* by Okkervil River a lot, and there's a lot of stuff where when he's singing that live, I bet he doesn't hit it all the time kind of stuff so I just kind of reached as far as I could with the range that I was singing in and it ended up being something that worked. It's not really more complicated than that. I always liked music that had yelling, not really hardcore but you know.

KL: Letting it out?

JD: Cathartic indie rock, yeah. So that's how it happened, pretty organically. I was only nineteen when I was cutting the vocals for *Why There Are Mountains*, so I just arrived at something that didn't sound bad while working with limited range.

KL: I like that kind of music because I can shout along to it in my car and not feel bad about my voice, whereas if I were trying to sing along with Sharon van Etten it's like why even try?



JD: Exactly, it's like David Berman in Silver Jews when he sings, "All my favorite singers couldn't sing." That line, for a while, was what I thought. But, for the third record we just didn't want to be shitty indie rock anymore, we didn't want to be working within these strictures. Like "Oh we have a bad drummer so we can't really do this thing," or "oh Joe's not really a great singer so we can't do this kind of thing," so we changed all of that.

KL: I heard you hitting some pretty high notes when you were sound checking "Jackson" earlier…

JD: Oh yeah, I'm a great singer now, but I worked at it. It took six years on the road, and every day singing in my room and doing vocal warm ups and taking lessons. So if I didn't have it by now…[laughs]

KL: So you started Cymbals Eat Guitars shortly after you graduated from high school?

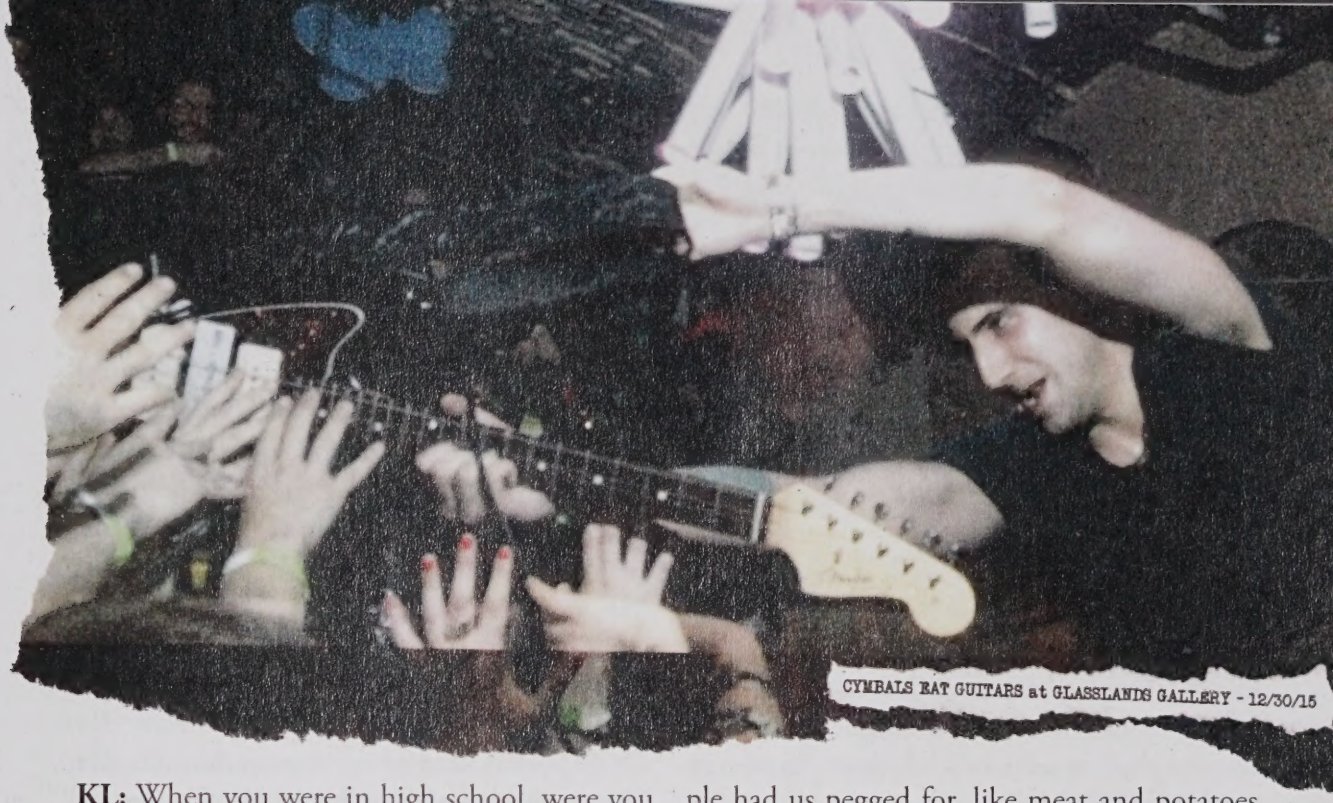
JD: Yeah, it was called Joseph Ferocious. It was me and Matt Miller. I still have the record. Have you heard it?

KL: No I haven't, but I've watched videos of Joseph Ferocious playing at The Stone Pony [in Asbury Park, NJ]—the cover of "Happy" by The Wrens.

JD: [lights up] That's Ben! The other guy singing, the dark hair, taller guy, that's Ben, who the record [*LOSE*] is mostly about.

KL: It's a great cover.

JD: [laughing] Yeah, it was pretty good for being seventeen or whatever I was, sixteen.



KL: When you were in high school, were you in bands? Was Joseph Ferocious your moniker?

JD: Well I was in some shitty cover band things before I started writing my own music and I had some really bad like cock rock stuff, and then I started listening to like British music; Oasis, Blur, stuff like that, and I started writing better chord progressions. And that's when I started writing the Joseph Ferocious stuff. I had some interest from Bar/None records back in the day, like Jersey record labels and fanzines in Jersey like Jersey beat. Jim Testa—he's been doing it [Jersey Beat] for like thirty years. He's a New Jersey stalwart. He was my most vocal supporter but once I got to college I dissolved Joseph Ferocious and started a new band.

KL: While we're talking about the early stages of Cymbals Eat Guitars—what kind of bands were you listening to at the time?

JD: It was pretty much everything that people had us pegged for, like meat and potatoes nineties indie rock; Built to Spill, Pavement, Modest Mouse…It's what I was into and obviously it showed on the first record. It's pretty slavish now that I think about it. There's Pixies in there too, screaming, and The Wrens, that's what I was mainly into at that time. Yo La Tengo's *I Can Hear the Heart Beating As One* is really special for me. And some more obscure stuff started to come into the mix a little later like Bedhead and Polvo, bands like that.

KL: With all of the lineup changes the band has had over the years—has that changed the way that you write or collaborate creatively?

JD: Yeah, totally. The last piece of the puzzle fell into place when Andy joined two years ago. Things are just way easier now. I don't have to overthink anything anymore, I can just have four chords and a melody that works and bring it to everybody and we can arrange it together and it just sounds great. It's like a nice safety

From left: D'Agostino, Brian Hamilton, Matt Whipple, Andrew Dole.

net to know that we have people who are really capable and bring a lot to the table. It wasn't always that way. We were always being hamstrung by one weakness or another, whether it was the rhythm section or whatever. So now everything has solidified.

KL: I think it definitely shows. What was it like touring with Bob Mould earlier this fall?

JD: It was awesome. We toured with him before, when he was doing *Copper Blue* shows back in 2012—we opened those, but to get the whole tour was really exciting.

KL: Was it weird being on the same platform as an artist you looked up to when you were younger?

JD: Like the greatest...like the guy who invented what we do? Yeah, we were conscious of it the whole time, but I think he was having a really good time with us too, like after we played in DC he made a point of coming up to us after we loaded out and being like, "you guys made me step it up tonight" and every night after that was just like you just have to struggle to not be forgotten. Because Bob is like crushingly loud and unrelenting, and his set is just hit after hit after hit after hit and people go batshit for it. We definitely learned a lot about the key to putting on a rock show, as opposed to getting too spacey and too far out there, keeping people engaged and excited.

KL: Do you think that when you were writing the songs for *LOSE* you were thinking about touring with the album and whether the songs would be good to play live in front of an audience?

JD: Yeah absolutely. I didn't think about it at all for the first record because it was a studio project and I never expected that album to play live or even really at all, and with *Lenses Alien* [2011]—I'm tired of shitting on that record to the press and I think a lot of our fans are too, it's just like you know what's wrong with that album? Nothing's wrong with it, but it wasn't as fun to play as these songs. So we were consciously trying to make songs that were a little more open, accessible, more fun to play and more fun to listen to. And lyrically a little more relatable in some ways, they're hyper-specific still but I think you can get inside them a little more which is very important. And it's shown, I mean we have people singing along and hanging on every word at our headlining shows.

KL: Do you have a favorite track you like to play live these days?

JD: Well it depends who we're touring with, like on the Bob Mould tour it would be great to come out the gate with "Warning." We'd open with it and you could just see whoever wasn't paying attention was immediately paying attention and glued to us after that. And that's a really good feeling. We felt like the greatest

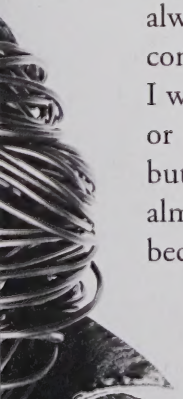
rock band in the country after those opening sets with Bob just because people were very receptive. So "Warning" is a fun one to play when we get to it, people really like that song. I personally like playing "Jackson," I think it's my favorite song I've ever written, and it means the most to me so when I hear people singing it loudly back at me, that's a really good feeling with that song. I guess "Laramie" because I know that the end is coming. I have a conflicted relationship with live performance. I'm half relieved that it's over when it's over, so it's kind of like a flood of relief when we're finally getting towards the end and I like playing "Laramie" and really just laying it all out there and walking off.

KL: That sounds pretty cathartic. I imagine the process of writing and recording *LOSE* must've been emotionally draining but with a similar feeling of release...

JD: Yeah that kind of thing sure. I have some deeply engrained physical reactions to live performance that I haven't been able to reprogram my body to get over. Like I used to have heart palpitations that were pretty severe. My heart would jump to 200 beats a minute out of nowhere and it wouldn't stop and then I got it fixed in August and it's been a lot better and I haven't had a single one since, but I still just have the anxiety about it. I haven't gotten over it yet, because it was always looming. It was always this big hyped up thing and I was never confident because either we were shitty live or I was going to have some kind of panic attack or heart palpitation or one thing or another, but now it's just like everything's ok and it's almost hard to accept. Sleep was so weird too because when we were on tour it would happen to me way more because I was overtired. I would just be sitting in the van and sometimes it would happen when I was really tired. I have the same anxieties even though I know that it's not going to happen. I'm slowly starting to get over it. We've done about a hundred shows since I got it fixed in August, which should be enough. I'll probably have some fun tonight.

KL: So is it hard for you to make a record that your audience will relate to but at the same time maintain your personal authenticity? Do you put personal authenticity first when writing?

JD: It's the most difficult thing, but yes absolutely. I wrote a song that we're going to record to release as a single sometime in the spring or summer and we went on tour with Brand New and Jesse Lacey from Brand New is going to produce it and record it in their studio. We wrote it for that, and I played it for my Mom and Dad because I always do that; I play it for them first, because I get to hear a real layman's perspective and they're always just like why do you have to put in that bit about such and such, a really specific thing, why can't you just make it a little more universal? And I don't know, I think I have to have that element of myself in there, like the humanity behind whatever else is going on. I don't know whether that's narcissism or what but it's my art, and I want to keep it that way. You just gotta tweak it a little bit. I mean the progress we made from *Lenses Alien* to *LOSE* in terms of people being at our shows and giving a shit is proof enough that whatever we did differently was enough. Keep it personal but also just open it up the tiniest bit. It's just a little tweak but it's a very subtle line to have to walk. So we're learning how to do it.



KL: I care about that super specific stuff because even if it's not exactly the same places that I have been to or lived in New Jersey, it still seems very applicable, especially the lines about driving in the car. That's when I tend to think about things the most, in the car—the car and my bed.

JD: The Wrens are my favorite band, and Charles [Bissell, their lead singer] is hyper-descriptive, so it's all about the place names and sense of place. The song "She Sends Kisses" is like, "I walk it down / this tourist town / just thought I'd call / just friends" like Cape May and Galloway, dropping all these Jersey signifiers, that's just what's in my heart so that's what's gonna come out.

KL: Some artists don't agree with the idea that place has a significant impact on their sound or their lyrics. What role you think regionalism, or sense of place, plays in the creative process and what it means to you?

JD: I think that context is everything. You can drop place names and proper names and have it be really lame. I can't think of an example right now, nor would I want to shit on anybody but I mean it can be really bad. I can't even tell you what the line is where it becomes something that's really cool and works and something that's super shitty. As always the line is really thin.

KL: I could imagine a pretty bad song with lyrics about subway stops in Brooklyn or something.

JD: Exactly. Or like, Staten Island. "Chambers" is pretty Staten Island, but that song skirts the line more than any other that we have between what could've been so shitty, but instead it's a really good song and I like it a lot. I don't think you can dismiss anything completely, I think anyone can bring something to it that makes it viable, and I think that I absolutely do.

KL: I think Titus Andronicus does it well too.

JD: OH OH OH! Exactly. That's how you do it. *The Monitor* is my favorite album of the 2000s. The first time I heard "A More Perfect Union," it made me wanna fist-fuck the breeze. I was in my car, and I don't get that feeling a lot. And then it just kept going. That's a really special record for me. That album made me write "XR"…that and playing our first couple house shows in New Brunswick. That song that Jenn Wasner sings on, from Wye Oak, it's the only song with female-vocals, she sings lead, that ballad towards the end of the record—[singing] "like a time traveler who killed his grandfather…."

KL: "To Old Friends and New"!

JD: It's beautiful. That's a beautiful song.

KL: It's so good. What are you listening to most right now?

JD: I circled back on *Cold Roses* by Ryan Adams and the Cardinals—love it. I listen to *Never Hungover Again*, by Joyce Manor, every day. I listen to *DSU*, by Alex G, every day. Some older stuff, I've been listening to—Loop, who were around the same time as Spacemen 3, but made way better drug music than Spacemen 3. Repetition heavy, as the name would suggest, but very powerful. I got Spotify recently so I've been listening to a lot more music in general. I like that Ought record [*More Than Any Other*

Day], St. Vincent still—that record's really good and I love her live. God, I'll never touch her, no guitarist I know could ever touch her. She's amazing, she's got it all. I always listen to The Band a lot, *Big Pink*, self-titled, and *The Last Waltz*—I watch *The Last Waltz*, like, monthly.

KL: How do you feel about all of the Williamsburg venues around Kent Avenue closing, like Death By Audio, 285 Kent, and now Glasslands?

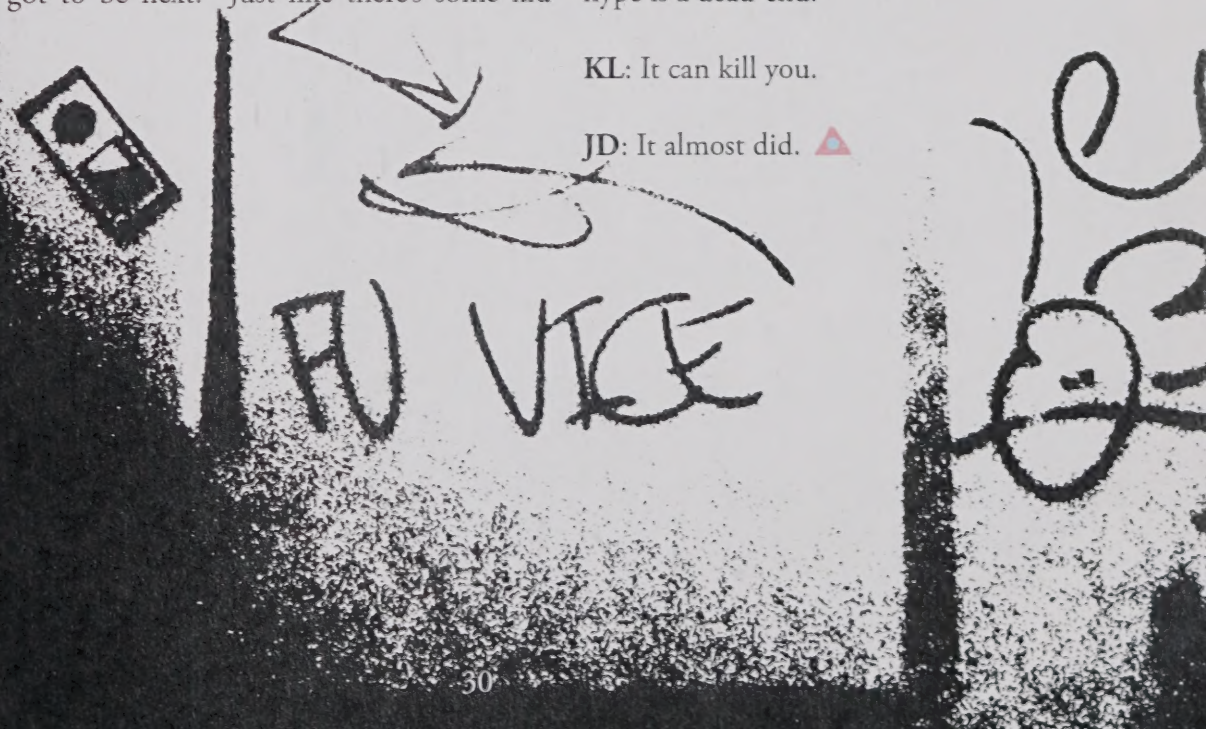
JD: If you walk around the neighborhood you realize it's only a matter of time. Artists aren't coming to Williamsburg anymore to live cheaply and work. It's not really happening. I mean, this isn't the happening place any more. It is for a different class of people but not anymore for people like us. It's sad. I never played Death by Audio, I also never played 285 Kent, but I went to a bunch of shows there. Shithole, but good-looking. So it's sad, but I don't know, some place has got to be next. Just like there's some kid starting up a tumblr right now that's going to be the next Ryan Schreiber or whoever. Somebody's got to do something about that. Seriously, there's got to be something else now. Pitchfork is like the new Rolling Stone. They are full on poptimist. I think, by and large, they're awful. The writing is pretty terrible.

KL: It can be pretty indulgent sometimes.

JD: It's ridiculous, and I was too scared to bite the hand that fed when we were the beneficiaries of it but, I mean, we're taking emo tours now. I want to tour with Brand New again, we're touring with Say Anything and Modern Baseball in June and July. These are fucking awesome rock bands that a lot of people love. Like, The Hotelier, that album is awesome. Tigers Jaw. The stuff is just emo, it's good. That's what we're aligning ourselves with as far as like—I don't want it to sound like it's our business, but it is—it's like we want to get in to that realm because hype is a dead-end.

KL: It can kill you.

JD: It almost did.



CYMBALS EAT GUITARS - a playlist
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1. CYMBALS EAT GUITARS - 2 Hip Soul
2. THE WRENS - HAppy
3. OKKERVIL RIVER - Black
4. SILVER JEWS - We Are Real
5. CYMBALS EAT GUITARS - Jackson
6. GREEN ARROWS - Untitled
7. BLUR - No Distance Left To Run
8. BUILT TO SPILL - Carry the Zero
9. PAVEMENT - Elevate Me Later
10. MODEST MOUSE # Heart Cooks Brain
11. PIXIES - Hey
12. YO LA TENGO - Green Arrow
13. POLVO # Tragic Carpet Ride
14. HUSKER DU - Pink Turns To Blue

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15. CYMBALS EAT GUITARS -Warning
16. THE WRENS - she Sends KIsses
17. TITUS ANDRONICUS - A More Perfect Union
18. TITUS ANDRONICUS - To Old Friends and New
19. ALEX G - After Ur Gone
20. CYMBALS EAT GUITARS - Laramie
21. JOYCE MANOR - Christmas Card
22. LOOP- Soundhead
23. SPACEMEN 3 - Hey Man
24. OUGHT - Today More Than Any Other Day
25. St. VINCENT - Severed Crossed Fingers
26. THE BAND - The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down
27. THE HOTELIER - An Introduction TO The Album
28. BRAND NEW - Mix Tape

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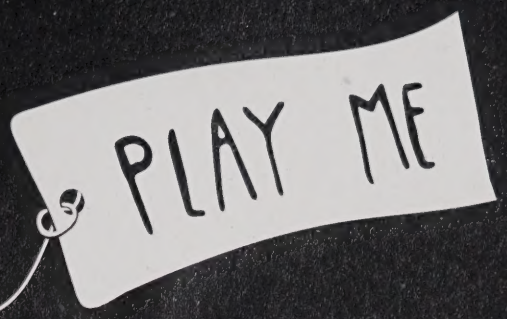


WRMC Highlights

WRMC Announces Fall Broadcast Schedule

The Evening News R... been moved to a later t... new News Department... by News Director Lin... and department manag... Langlie, Marion Melc... Stevenson, Dave ... attempt to revamp th... ment.

In addition to the new... time for the Monday... Friday Evening report,... department is putti... emphasis on newscast... as opposed to seniori... allows for the addition... new personalities to p... in the Evening report a... hourly five-minute ... broadcast throughout ...

Also in the News Departments plans are the production of local and public interest shows in cooperation with the Special Productions Department.

FMphasis, the written voice of WRMC-FM is once again in the making. After a year's hiatus, the station publication promises to be better than ever.

FMphasis welcomes, contributions from anyone. Contributions can be submitted directly to WRMC-FM, Box C2200.

Revisited.

At 12 midnight Monday-Friday WRMC presents the Midnite LP, during which an LP is premiered in its entirety.

...the written voice of ...is once again in the ...r a year's hiatus, the ...cation promises to be ...ever.

...elcomes, con... ...rom anyone. Con... ...can be submitted ... WRMC-FM, Box ...

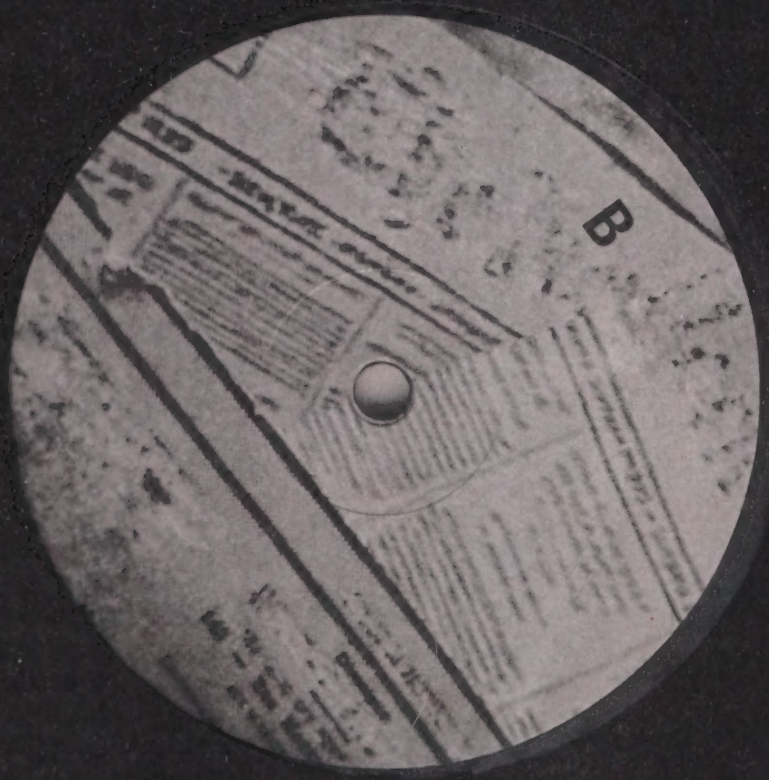
...ssue is scheduled for ...

...S OF THE WEEK ...phony Sun. 5-7p.m. ...pecial featuring the ...ly Joel - Friday at ...

91.7

Bringing you all the action from Williams Oct. 1. As the Panthers travel to the home pasture of the Purple Cows.

Your Hosts: John Sowden, Mike Cohen. Kickoff 2:00 p.m.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